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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Protection of Palestinian students and educational institutions and safeguarding of the security of the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the occupied Palestinian territory

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 47/69 K of 14 December 1992, the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Condemns the repeated Israeli raids on the premises and installations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from such raids;

"2. Deplores the policy and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which have led to the prolonged closure of educational and vocational institutions, a large number of which are operated by the Agency, and the repeated disruption of medical services;

"3. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to open immediately all closed educational and vocational institutions and to refrain from closing them thereafter;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 18 February 1993, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the resolution and requested the Permanent Representative to inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 15 June 1993, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

> "This resolution is unbalanced, distorting the role and policy of the Government of Israel. The policy of the Government of Israel has been, and remains, to encourage the improvement and development of the educational system in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. During the period of Israel's administration, the level of education and literacy in these territories has improved markedly and many new institutions of learning were established.
>
> "Since December 1987, however, the schools have frequently been exploited as centres for the organizing and launching of violent activities.
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> "Measures taken by the authorities have been a direct result of, and in reaction to, activities which have nothing to do with education.
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> "Those measures have been successful and have enabled the authorities to permit the reopening of all educational institutions, including all seven institutions of higher education in the administered territories, as recently recognized by 26 C/Resolution 16 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization."

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 47/69 K is based on reports from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It covers the period from 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993 and relates exclusively to UNRWA educational institutions and other facilities. Further information is contained in the annual report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA 1/ for the above-mentioned period.

5. During the period under review, there were 77 cases of unauthorized entry into UNRWA premises in the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. Of these, 34 related to schools and 3 to health centres. In the Gaza Strip there were 186 such cases, of which 86 related to schools and 74 to health centres. UNRWA has taken up these cases with the Israeli authorities who, in a number of instances, have claimed that UNRWA premises were entered because stones had been thrown from within, or stone-throwers were being chased into the premises.

6. During the same period, there were two fatalities and 39 cases of injury among students and trainees at UNRWA educational institutions in the West Bank. The corresponding figures for the Gaza Strip were 20 fatalities and 1,077 injuries. These casualties were attributable to beatings, tear-gas inhalation, rubber bullets and live ammunition. In addition, a total of 76 students and trainees in the West Bank and 159 in the Gaza Strip were detained, of whom 53 in the West Bank and 94 in the Gaza Strip were released by 30 June 1993.

7. In late 1992, the three training centres of UNRWA in the West Bank completed the 1991/1992 academic year. The 1992/1993 academic year began at all three training centres in the course of November 1992. An average of 21 per cent of academic time was lost due to general strikes, curfews and severe weather conditions. At the end of March 1993, the closure by the Israeli authorities of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from Israel and East Jerusalem adversely affected the number of trainees and staff who were able to attend the training centres in the West Bank, particularly those from the Gaza Strip and the southern part of the West Bank. By June 1993, practical measures adopted by the Israeli authorities enabled most of the trainees and staff thus affected to attend the training centres. Owing to a concern for educational pursuit and the demands of the students who were not allowed to leave Gaza, the Agency requested and obtained permits from the Israeli authorities for students from Gaza attending UNRWA training centres in the West Bank. However, of a total of 361 students from the Gaza Strip attending Ramallah and Kalandia Training Centres, 33 students did not receive permits to study in the West Bank. The Gaza Training Centre lost 29 per cent of days as result of military closure orders and 10 per cent of days owing to general strikes and curfews.

8. In the West Bank, a total of 8 per cent of school time was lost between September 1992 and June 1993, owing primarily to military closures, general strikes and curfews. In the Gaza Strip, the corresponding amount of school time lost was 16.8 per cent. Two schools were closed throughout the entire year by a military closure order. Alternative places of education were used for teaching classes from schools that were closed by military order.

9. During the reporting period, the Agency provided students in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with distance education and self-learning materials, but such measures can provide only partial compensation for lost classroom time. Preliminary analysis of achievement tests that UNRWA administered to students at the beginning of the 1992/1993 academic year in a wide variety of subjects disclosed a detrimental effect on the educational performance of students.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/48/13), paras. 135-140 and 149-153.